

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-10 SPC-03 SAM-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15

PRS-01 EB-11 DRC-01 /123 W

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R 201126Z FEB 74

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 784

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0089

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ, FR

SUBJECT: JOBERT VISIT TO IRAQ

1. FRENCH AMBASSADOR CERLES TOLD ME GOI HAD GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO WELCOME FORMIN JOBERT DURING FEB 7-9 VISIT TO IRAQ. IN ADDITION TO TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH RCC VICE CHAIRMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN AND MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BAKR, KEY RCC MEMBERS SUCH AS IZZAT MUSTAFA AND IZZAT AD-DOURI HAD INSISTED ON MEETING WITH HIM INDIVIDUALLY. MORE THAN HALF OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAD SHOWN UP FOR AMBASSADOR'S DINNER, SOME OF WHOM WERE NOT EVEN INVITED. JOBERT, BECAUSE OF HIS ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL BACKGROUND, WAS IN CERLES VIEW PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE WITH ECONOMIC MINISTERS. JOBERT
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MADE CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT VISIT WAS POLITICAL AND HE HAD NOT COME TO SIGN OR NEGOTIATE ANY SPECIFIC ACCORDS.

2. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH IRAQIS JOBERT STRESSED CLOSE HISTORICAL AND STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEAR EAST AND EUROPE AND IMPORTANCE OF EXPANDING THESE TIES TO THEIR MUTUAL BENEFIT AND AS PART OF COOPERATION BETWEEN INDUSTRIALIZED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. IRAQIS RESPONDED ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO THIS EUROPEAN-ARAB APPROACH.

3. PRINCIPAL NEW FRENH PROPOSAL WAS OFFER TO ASSIT IN DEVELOPMENT OF IRAQ'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY WELL RECEIVED BY GOI WHICH IS SEEKING WAYS TO DEVELOP LAGGING AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. AMB CERLES SAID RATIONALE FOR THIS APPROACH RELATED TO FEAR OF BAATH REGIME THAT "REACTIONARY" REGIMES IN AREA POSE THREAT TO ITS EXISTENCE. IF REGIME CAN BE ASSISTED IN STRENGTHENING ITS DOMESTIC POSITION THROUGH SUCCESSFUL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, THIS FEAR SHOULD DIMINISH WITH CORRESPONDING ADOPTIONOF MORE RESPONSIBLE AND RELISTIC POLICIES. AS RESULT THESE DISCUSSIONS FRENCH MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE CHIRAC WILL VISIT IRAQ IN APRIL. VISIT OF PM MESSMER IN SEPTEMBER WILL BE FOR PURPOSE OF NOTING "PROGRESS ALREADY ACHIEVED". GOI PLEASED WITH THESE COMMITMENTS FOR RAPID IMPLEMENTATION.

4. ACCORDING TO CERLES, JOBERT AVOIDED DISCUSSION OF MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT AND PALESTINE QUESTION DID NOT COME UP IN ANY OF DISCUSSIONS, NOT EVEN IN TWO HOUR MEETING WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN DURING WHICH SADDAM HAD MADE "BRILLIANT" EXPOSE OF IRAQI POLICY.

5. COMMENT: JOBERT VISIT HAS CONSOLIDATED STRONG FRENCH POSITION AND OFFER TO HELP WITH AGRICULTURE SECTORADDS NEW DIMENSION TO FRENCH ROLE. ALTHOUGH MAJOR DIFFICULTIES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN DEVELOPING AGRICULTURAL SECTOR, FRENCH DECISION COULD HAVE FAR REACHING CONSEQUENCES FOR BAATH REGIME AND WESTERN POSITION IN IRAQ. LOWRIE

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